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ABSTRACT

A kindergarten teacher implemented a practicum designed to increase parent involvement in their children's kindergarten and give parents information about the kindergarten program. Specific goals of the intervention were to inform parents about kindergarten routine, kindergarten requirements and concepts of child development, and to help parents develop positive attitudes toward the school. Intervention activities selected to address the need for increased parent participation included: (1) kindergarten orientation; (2) monthly newsletters; (3) parent workshops; (4) child-produced presentations for parents; (5) a classroom volunteer program; (6) a classroom visitation program; and (7) parent-teacher conferences. Practicum evaluation data indicated that the goals of the intervention were met. In view of the program's effectiveness, participating kindergarten teachers planned to continue it for a second year. Related materials including the survey instrument are appended. (RH)

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A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO INCREASE INVOLVEMENT AND PROVIDE EDUCATION TO PARENTS OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

BY

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

A Program Designed to Increase Involvement and Provide Education to Parents of Kindergarten Children

by

Leah B. Nachman

Cluster XXII

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1988

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Doris Itzkowitz

Primary Specialist

Sunrise, Florida

6/24/88
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Leah B. Nachman under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

7/25/88
Date of Final Approval of Report

Polly W. Peterson, Ph.D.
Polly W. Peterson, Ph.D., Adviser

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I would like to thank Dr. Polly Peterson for her continued support and guidance through the entire practicum process. Her enthusiasm and encouragement served as an incentive to me to stay on task.

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I wish to thank my husband, Steven, and our children for their patience and understanding during this last year.

Leah B. Nachman

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ABSTRACT

A Program Designed to Increase Involvement and Provide Information to Parents of Kindergarten Children. Nachman, Leah B., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Kindergarten Children/Parent Involvement/Parent-Teacher Relationship/Kindergarten Teachers/Parent Participation/Parent-Teacher Conferences/Kindergarten Curriculum.

This practicum was designed to increase parent involvement and knowledge of the kindergarten program by providing specific activities for interaction.

The writer selected the following activities based on a review of the literature: (a) kindergarten orientation, (b) monthly newsletters, (c) parent workshops, (d) child produced presentations for parents, (e) classroom volunteer program, (f) classroom visitation program, and (g) parent-teacher conferences. To evaluate the success of the program, the following instruments were administered: a child development questionnaire, a parent evaluation form, a parent attitude survey, and random interviews with parents. Specific goals were to increase parent knowledge of the kindergarten routine, provide information about kindergarten requirements and concepts of child growth and development, and develop a positive attitude toward the school.

Analysis of the data revealed that parents increased their knowledge and involvement in the kindergarten program. Gains were made by the parents for each objective that was measured. Results showed that parents increased their knowledge of kindergarten routines, minimum basic skills, and child growth and development. Parents developed positive attitudes toward their child's teacher, school and kindergarten program. It can be concluded that parents' increased knowledge and involvement were directly related to the specific activities and techniques used in this program. Equally important was the response by kindergarten teachers who collaborated and participated in this year long practicum. The consensus was that the school year was an extremely smooth one in terms of interaction with parents and plans to continue the activities used in this program are being made for the next school year.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting in which this practicum was done is an elementary school serving children in grades kindergarten through five. Approximately 814 students attend this elementary school which is located in the southeast portion of the state some 20 miles away from a popular vacation beach resort. While tourism is the major industry for this area, it has little direct effect on the community in which the school is located.

The school itself is located in a community which has a middle class socio-economic status. The student body is 97% Causcasian, with 3% composed of Black, Hispanic, and Oriental students. Most students come from families where both parents work in order to maintain their homes and family lifestyle. The area is comprised of single family three and four bedroom homes in a suburban development. Parents are very active in many volunteer programs and the Parent Teacher Organization at this school. Working parents who are unable to volunteer during the day often participate in functions planned for the evenings and weekends.

Academically this school ranked fourth in the school district based on standardized test results. Parents, teachers, administrators and students are goal oriented and competitive in securing academic honors. Programs at the school are geared to improving the quality of education and the students' abilities to produce high achievement.

The students involved in this practicum attend kindergarten. These students are entering the school system for the first time. Admittance to kindergarten requires the child be five years of age prior to September 1, 1987. These children may or may not have prior school experience at a private school or day care facility. Their parents are interested in the program in which their child will be involved and have many questions. Kindergarten is a program to teach children readiness skills and provide opportunities to develop a positive self-concept through a variety of social and play experiences.

The kindergarten program is the same length as a regular school day for other grade levels which is six hours. This became district policy in 1974, prior to which Kindergarten was a half day program. The kindergarten children remain with the same teacher for

the entire day except for their lunchtime and special classes.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer's role is a kindergarten teacher for children who are five and six years old. She has 13 years of teaching experience at the elementary school level, of which eight years are in the kindergarten classroom. Her educational background is a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education with a special curriculum in reading. The responsibilities include developing positive social behaviors, developing a curriculum for reading, math, and language, as well as encouraging curiosity and interest in learning and school activities. Not only did the writer work with students, but she worked with their parents. Parent involvement in the educational process was encouraged and the positive relationships which developed promoted easier adjustment for the kindergarten students. The major responsibility of the kindergarten teacher is the daily instruction according to the school district's pupil progression plan. The purpose of the program is to cover all minimum basic skills in reading, math, and writing and create an environment

which provides students with developmental activities that promote learning in a positive environment. Emphasis is placed on manipulative and game type approaches using daily language experiences. Encouragement is given to students through various incentives that are positive in nature. A major goal is to promote interest in learning in an environment that will not produce frustration or low self-esteem. Students in this type of learning environment are enthusiastic about coming to school. The parents of all kindergarten students attending this school were involved in this practicum experience. At this time there are 146 children enrolled in the kindergarten program.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem for the parents of kindergarten children was that they were unaware of the present day kindergarten program and its goals and requirements. Parents were unfamiliar with the daily schedule and activities in the kindergarten classroom and the purpose they have in developing necessary skills for students. Parents lacked an understanding of the kindergarten curriculum, philosophy and child development which determine the program presented by the kindergarten teachers.

The parents of kindergarten children in this setting were eager to receive as much information about the school program as possible. This resulted in numerous phone calls and visits to the classroom with their inquiries about classroom activities and routines. Teacher planning time, which is normally used to prepare and organize the day's activities, was often interrupted by parents who had questions. These questions were of real importance to parents

unfamiliar with classroom procedures. Concerned parents are vital to student adjustment and success in their first school experience, therefore, teachers were courteous and cooperative whenever approached for information by the parents of their students.

The classroom teachers were adversely affected by this problem because parents interrupted the time allotted to them to prepare the necessary materials for the day's activities. These interruptions minimized teacher preparation time and then disrupted the school day for the children, because the teachers had not sufficiently prepared the materials to begin the school day.

The reasons why this problem had not been solved previously are numerous. Prior to this school year no separate kindergarten orientation for parents was held before the first day of school. An Open School Night was held for grades kindergarten through five on one evening rather than a kindergarten parent night held separately. This created conflict for parents having more than one child attending this elementary school. Another reason for the problem is parents may not remember information presented at a meeting, or may not realize its relevance. This results in parents posing questions at a later time. Lastly, the kindergarten program has changed in recent years and this makes it

more difficult to understand when compared to past kindergarten programs.

The problem was that parents wanted to be provided with information about the kindergarten program from their child's home school to create a positive and successful school year for their children.

Problem Documentation

To prove the problem that parents lack of knowledge of the kindergarten program existed, the primary specialist was interviewed about the number of contacts with parents and the kind of information parents requested. The primary specialist was asked to make a list of topics most frequently asked about by parents, and suggest some ways to provide them with this information (see Appendix A for Primary Specialist Interview).

Kindergarten teachers were given a questionnaire to determine how they viewed parent phone calls and interruptions during their designated planning time. It consisted of 10 questions for the purpose of finding ways to eliminate the number of parent contacts concerning day to day classroom functions (see Appendix B).

A discussion with the director of the Early Childhood Education department for the school system

described in this practicum provided support to the writer that parents need more information about their child and his/her educational program. Although numerous parent workshops, seminars, and magazine articles discussing education of young children are available, the majority of parents desire information from their child's particular school. This task of providing specific information is beyond the scope of the Early Childhood Education Department. The director recommended that a program, workshop, or brochure might be helpful to parents requesting information(July, 1987).

Finally, parents were surveyed to find out their idea of what the kindergarten curriculum is and what information they feel they want to know. Suggestions by parents were looked at to develop a positive means of contact for parents and teachers. Survey questions requiring yes or no answers as well as open ended resposes to elicit ideas and feelings were included. (See Appendix C for Parent Survey.)

Information gathered from the above sources suggest a need to implement a program to improve parent knowledge of the current kindergarten curriculum.

Causative Analysis

One cause for the parents lack of knowledge about

the kindergarten curriculum is that this is their initial contact with the local school system. Many parents are new to the community and are enrolling their children for the first time at this particular school. Records from previous years show that approximately 60% of the students entering kindergarten have no siblings with prior associations to the school. Therefore, parents are likely to be unfamiliar with the day to day procedures and request frequent contacts with the classsroom teacher. This particular community is experiencing rapid growth with an influx of families from various parts of the eastern United States. The 1984 Census Report listed the area where this school is located as one of the fastest growing regions in the country.

Another cause of the problem is that many of the children entering kindergarten are the oldest child in the family or an only child. Last year, 42% of the children entering kindergarten in this school setting were either the oldest child in the family or an only child. Single child families are becoming more prevalent in modern society with the increase of working mothers and the postponement to begin families. These parents are faced with a situation similar to those parents who are new to the community. They are unaware

of the school curriculum and its policies, and they are interested in helping their child make a successful adjustment to the school. Parents of an only child are often interested in becoming active in their child's educational process. They usually have more time to devote to their child's activities and understand the importance of parent participation (Maeroff, 1982).

Young parents seem to lack knowlege about the curriculum in kindergarten and are looking for a source of accessible information. These younger parents are often removed from their extended family support systems which previously served as their place to gather information. Today's mobile society has separated families, leaving them without a network with which to share their experiences and concerns. Young families look to the school to guide them and provide answers to their numerous questions (Regets, 1982).

The importance placed on education and getting a good start has encouraged parents to take an active role in their child's school. Head Start provided parents with the idea of educationing children early and thus, becoming involved in the process (Zigler, 1978). Parents feel it is their obligation to act as an agent for their child. Thus, they choose to become active at their child's school and work to develop a positive

relationship with their child's teacher. Achievement and school success are the critical factors that lead parents to request information about school curriculum.

The final cause for parents' lack of knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum is the change of philosphy in recent years in the program. This particular school system, like many others in the country, has reevaluated the goal for kindergarten children. Very recently, the Early Childhood Department adopted a developmental philosophy for both the type of curriculum presented and the basis for placement of children. This has caused much discussion and confusion for parents who are more familiar with traditional programs.

Not only has the philosophy changed, but very little material has been circulated to parents to explain what a developmental program actually is. Parents wishing to participate in their child's educational process are uncertain about what they should look for to assess their child's achievement. Parents turn to their child's teacher and the school as the logical source of accessible information to help them with these concerns.

In conclusion there are several causes for the parents' lack of knowledge regarding the kindergarten curriculum and philosphy. For the purpose of this

practicum the above three causes have been selected because they are the ones that are most prevalent in this particular setting. It is the writer's observation that a program to remove them should improve parents' knowledge of the kindergarten program, curriculum and philosophy (PREP - 79-80).

The Related Literature

The importance of parent knowledge and participation in their child's educational process is documented in every book and journal dealing with early childhood education. Hildebrand (1981) states that educating children becomes an easier task for the teacher when parents are involved and understand the programs's goals. This becomes a task the teacher must accomplish among the numerous other duties. Sometimes this task is not difficult to attain because parents are eager to help their child become high achievers.

In a study by Edgar (1979), parental involvement in a child's educational program was found to be important to many parents. Cooperation between parents and teachers allowed parents to assist their children, a critical factor in the child's adjustment to their school situation. The conclusion made by Edgar was that building a positive parent teacher relationship assisted the child and the school in promoting a successful

school experience.

The enactment of Public Law 94-142 for students with exceptional problems (Lerner, 1981) created education appropriate for all students. In addition to establishing the use of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), one of its educational objectives is to include the child's parents to participate in planning a suitable program for their child. This created interest by both the school and parents to become involved in the planning of the child's educational program. Thus, parents are encouraged and often show strong interest in their school and their child's class.

Positive attitudes toward education and a particular school are increased by parent awareness of the school program. Epstein (1986) found parents who were cognizant of the school's curriculum and goals participated in school functions and supported the objectives by the school and its teachers. Further indications were that parents with positive attitudes toward to school volunteered more and assisted their children with various learning activities at home. Suggestions by the classroom teacher were more readily accepted by parents who felt comfortable and were well informed about their child's school.

Read (1979) conducted a study which found that a positive relationship between the parent and the child's school was the most influential factor in determining the child's self-concept and and success at school. He concluded both parents and school personnel should be made aware of this information.

The long-term effects of parental involvement were discussed by Powell (1986) in an article in which he states parents and children share equally in the benefits from the parents' participation. He further stated that family oriented programs lead to changes in the parents knowledge and understanding of the institution's educational goals. Powell concluded that quality programs to educate and involve parents are invaluable to the goals of early childhood education, and to change the parents' beliefs and behaviors toward innovative ideas.

Simmons and Brewer (1985) point out that parents tend to ask typical questions of their child's school system inorder to feel more comfortable about sending their child to kindergarten. They suggest that the parent school relationship can be enhanced by finding appropriate means to accomodate parents in their search for information.

Developing a team for success in the classroom

begins with parents and teachers. Granowsky (1977) stated parent participation following training is a workable process to develop positive parent teacher cooperation. This relationship can begin slowly and will continue to grow through open communication and respect. Goodall (1985) supports parent involvement by suggesting parents be trained to work in the classroom and become aware of the skills their child will learn in the kindergarten program. The author makes additional suggestions for teachers to develop activities for parents to use at home with their children.

In 1984, both the Washington and New Jersey State Departments of Education developed information booklets for the parents of kindergarten children. Each stated as their goal the orientation of parents to the beliefs and goals that guide the educational practices in kindergarten. They included suggestions to parents on how they can support their child's educational development with specific recommendations for becoming involved in the school program and/or their child's classroom.

Williams (1984) feels so strongly about parent involvement in the educational system that he developed a program for teachers to learn strategies on how to effectively communicate with parents. The author

maintains the importance of building a positive relationship between teachers and parents can be done early in the school year using simple techniques. Copeland (1983) suggested teachers need to develop goals and activities for kindergarten stduents and inform parents as a means to encourage parent participation and help their children adapt to the school more easily.

Goodall (1983) reported fostering a good relationship between parents and teachers increased parent knowledge of the kindergarten program and the number of observations parents made in the classroom. The result of the study showed increased knowledge by parents decreased the number of absences of students because parents were more aware of the program goals. Lengel (1982) shows parents working in the educational system achieve the goals of the program more easily, suggesting that parental involvement is a crucial factor for every school system.

The Newark Unified School District (1983) developed a homework program for kindergarten students for the purpose of encouraging parents to spend positive time with their children at home and develop a positive partnership between parents and teachers. The activities developed were a direct response to the parents' questions of some of the ways they could help

their children. Comments from parents were positive, suggesting that the activity by teachers was worthwhile. Those parents and teachers who participated in this program were eager to see other parents become involved.

Similarly, Wiesendanger (1983) found that involving parents of children in the upper grades was important to explain the goals and procedures for the coming school year. Several techniques for building positive parent teacher relationships were discussed and recommended for implementation. Beer (1982) found that there are two categories of parental involvement in programs for children. The writer suggests that positive support by parents is to be made the primary goal to lead to long-term benefits and avoid negative feelings.

Williams and Stallworth (1982) conducted a survey of educators regarding parent involvement which indicated that teachers and administrators expressed a clear preference for securing positive involvement. An additional conclusion showed teachers felt training for teachers to work with parents was beneficial. Teachers were eager to be trained and stated they would like to see an inservice program on effective communication with parents.

The Hawaii State Department of Education (1978) and the Wisconsin State Department of Education have issued

handbooks for parents to involve them in the kindergarten curriculum. Each developed specific information to explain to parents how learning takes place. Then they encouraged parents to observe the program to see the learning process. Other parts of these projects included get acquainted activities. The daily routines for kindergarten children were explained to ease parent concerns about the rules and procedures that were to be followed.

The best way to increase parent knowledge regarding kindergarten curriculum is the implementation of parent involvement. When parents volunteer Okin (1978) states that students improve in the skills necessary for successful achievement in their program. Trained parents have a higher degree of interest in working with their children in and out of the classroom.

Studies done abroad by Haystead (1980) and Reese (1978) found that emphasis must be placed on increasing parent knowledge of curriculum to produce increased parental involvement in the school system. It is further stated that those parents who do become involved help their children develop characteristics that aid them in attaining positive educational characteristics.

With respect to reading ability, Greaney (1986) states parental influence in the home environment has

definite effects on the childs development and habits at school. It is important to understand that student success is not determined by the education at school, but is a combination of parental involvement in the school setting and at home.

Parent participation may begin with the parent-teacher conference. Arnold (1978) recommends that teachers view a conference with the same careful attention as their lesson plans. A comfortable situation must be established to develop a positive alliance between the teacher and parent. Arnold suggests teachers should assume the parent is an expert on his/her child and actively listen to a parent prior to sharing the child's academic record. This is especially important in conferences where a problem exists. The author concludes that open communication at a conference will enhance the parent's positive feelings about the teacher and other school personnel, developing a relationship that will benefit the child educational success.

Mental development of a child may be correlated to parental interaction with their children. It can be shown that even greater than socio-economic status, parental involvement at home and in later school age years can have positive effects on the child's

intellectual development. It may be concluded that parental involvement in the home environment should be encouraged to continue as the child enters school (Schickedanz, Schickedanz, & Forsyth, 1982).

Parental influence is an important part of a child's development and socialization process. Fischer and Lazerson (1984) report the interactions of parents and their children are those which are most influential in shaping the child's behavior and personality. This relationship remains constant through a child's educational process, thus, leading to a positive adjustment to the school situation.

In summary, a review of the literature discussed numerous methods of improving parental knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum. While some recommended specific means as opposed to others to achieve desired results, the consensus was that a positive parent-teacher relationship is beneficial to students, parents, and teachers. Both Hildebrand (1981) and Edgar (1979) found parental involvement to be the single most influential factor in facilitating school adjustment for young children. Epstein (1986) suggested that parental involvement establishes a relationship between the teacher and parent which allows teacher' suggestions to be more readily accepted and increases acceptance of

professional recommendations and evaluations. It can be concluded that the development of a positive parent-teacher relationship is supported by the literature and teachers who attempt such a program could experience positive results.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The major goal of this practicum was to increase parent knowledge of the kindergarten program requirements. Additional goals were to inform parents about the routines of a typical day in the kindergarten classroom and to have parents develop a positive attitude toward their child's educational program.

Behavioral Expectations

Over the duration of this practicum parents of kindergarten children were expected to:

1. Increase their knowledge of the kindergarten daily routine measured by a parent evaluation of the material presented.
2. Raise their knowledge of the kindergarten minimum basic skills measured by a parent evaluation of the material and its presentation.
3. Be familiar with the process of child development measured by a teacher-made questionnaire.
4. Develop a positive attitude toward their child's

teacher and school setting measured by a parent attitude survey.

The standard of performance projected for this practicum was that 80% of all parents would report they had increased their knowledge of the kindergarten program, philosophy, and curriculum. An 80% standard of performance was expected to be reported by parents stating they developed a more positive attitude toward their child's teacher and school.

Evaluation Instruments

The evaluation tools used were:

1. A parent evaluation form for knowledge of the kindergarten daily routine and the minimum basic skills. The evaluation form consists of eight written questions using a Likert scale. (See Appendix D).

2. A teacher-made questionnaire for parent knowledge of the theory of child development. It consists of five questions requiring a yes or no response and one open-ended question. (Appendix E).

3. An attitude survey to determine whether parents have a more positive attitude toward their child's teacher and school. The parent attitude survey has 15 questions using a Likert scale. A space is provided for parents to share comments. (Appendix F).

4. A parent interview form to allow parents to express their feelings about the kindergarten program and make suggestions for additional activities that could be included in the future. The parent interview form has four open ended questions which are administered verbally. (Appendix H).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

One strategy suggested in recent literature recommends developing printed material to answer parents' questions. Lopez (1985) and Bellingham Public Schools (1984) developed easy to read handbooks that parents could take home and refer to if questions should arise. It was found the handbook eliminated parent jitters for many parents new to the school system.

Using a booklet with 21 questions and answers was the technique used in the Georgia State Department of Education to help clarify the scope of the kindergarten program. The questions were those found to be of primary concern to parents as was discovered by experienced kindergarten teachers.

Inviting parents to an evening meeting or afternoon coffee was a different technique used to develop a positive parent-teacher relationship. Dickey (1979), Copeland (1983) and Goodall (1983) found that inorder

home. Parents were encouraged to use these activities as a source of spending time with their children in a positive atmosphere.

Activities for parent use at home were discussed by Goodall (1985) who suggested home learning activities increased parent involvement. To accomplish this goal material was developed for children to practice specific skills at home. The purpose was to give parents an overview of the curriculum and provide techniques on how to interact with their child. Results showed the parent-teacher and parent-child relationships were positive.

To increase parent knowledge of the school program Arnold (1978) suggested using the parent-teacher conference to develop a positive alliance. He suggests that conferences early in the school year are crucial to the year long relationship teachers establish with parents. A relationship exists between the parent's participation in the school program and the manner in which the conference is conducted. It also has a direct influence on how the parent perceives the teacher. Four specific steps on how to conduct a successful conference are discussed, and the teacher's willingness to accept questions and comments by the parent is given special emphasis. It encouraged teachers to set aside

time for parents to have an opportunity to share their expert knowledge of their child.

The last possible solution to the problem is the use of workshops to train parents about the kindergarten program. Paz (1980) found a workshop for parents on how to become involved in their child's kindergarten program improved parent's self-esteem. Beers (1982) stated effective parent involvement relates to their knowledge of the program and such workshops must set realistic goals. Williams (1982) found workshops were preferred by parents and teachers inorder to develop open communication and understanding of school activities.

Several of the suggestions from the literature were appropriate for use in this practicum. Additional solutions were incorporated as a result of collaboration with colleagues and other school personnel. Knowledge of child development and the ideas from the literature cited show the need for increasing parent knowledge of the present day kindergarten curriculum. Similar situations in similar settings with positive results for teachers, parents and children were presented in the literature. These studies recommended a plan using parent volunteers, classroom observations, a handbook for parents, special

activities in the classroom and the parent-teacher conference to increase parent knowledge and develop a positive working relationship between parents and teachers. These activities appear to be more suited to the setting in which this practicum was implemented. Programs which support the development of homework activities and inservice training for classroom teachers are not in keeping with the philoposhy of the author or other personnel at this school.

Description and Justification of Solution Selected

The solutions discussed were justified because they benefit parents by increasing their knowledge of kindergarten curriculum. This knowledge helped develop a more positive attitude by parents toward their child's teacher and school. These benefits are significant for the parents and should be equally positive for the children.

Each of the activities cited appears frequently in the literature suggesting their successful use with parents of elementary school children. For the purpose of this practicum, a combination of these activities was selected to increase parent knowledge of the curriculum and develop positive parent attitudes.

Additional justification can be found in the Early Childhood Education office which has several brochures

for teachers recommending parental support as a crucial element for educating children. A discussion with Early Childhood Education directors showed they sponsored workshops for parents to improve parental knowledge, however, they stated time did not allow them to sponsor workshops at each school. Support for a program to increase parent awareness of the kindergarten program was given by the department.

Report of Action Taken

This practicum was implemented in the kindergarten wing of the school building where the kindergarten classes meet daily. Six kindergarten teachers and 150 families were involved in the steps taken to implement this program on a monthly basis. Other school personnel and areas of the school were utilized at various times during the school year.

Month 1:

The steps taken to begin implementation of this program were:

1. A meeting with the primary specialist to discuss a program to increase parent knowledge of the kindergarten program. The primary specialist was interviewed for suggestions as to what activities could

be included to accomplish such a program (See Appendix A).

2. Plans were established for a kindergarten orientation where parents and children would meet their teacher, tour the school, and spend a brief amount of time in their classroom.

3. Invitations were mailed to all children registered to attend kindergarten with the date and time of the orientation.

4. A meeting of kindergarten teachers was held to explain the program and activities for increasing parent knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum. A discussion by the teachers established the need for such a program (See Appendix B - Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire). The writer explained the activities for the months ahead and asked for the cooperation of the kindergarten team. Suggestions by the teachers were recorded in a notebook for future use.

5. The kindergarten orientation was held prior to the first day of school. Parents accompanied their children to the orientation held in the school cafetorium. School administrators, kindergarten teachers and other support personnel were introduced. The primary specialist demonstrated a creative rhythm activity in which children were asked to participate.

The children were assigned to their classes and asked to follow their teacher and tour their future classroom. Each teacher had prepared an activity to share with the children and help them become familiar with the new surroundings. After approximately 20 minutes the children returned to the cafetorium to their parents. At that time, volunteers from the Parent Teacher Organization presented each child with a plastic mug bearing the school logo. Teachers spoke briefly to parents and answered simple questions about the procedure for the first day of school.

6. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss how to proceed with this program to increase parent knowledge of the kindergarten program, its goals and philosophy. Each teacher agreed to share their ideas to accomplish this goal. Grade meetings were established by the grade chairperson on a weekly basis and monthly meetings were scheduled for teacher workdays. All kindergarten teachers agreed to cooperate in this project to improve parent-teacher relationships, in the hope that the school year would be a more productive one.

7. Parent newsletters were distributed following the first week of school by the kindergarten teachers to remind parents of classroom routines. The schedule of

the kindergarten day, special classes, snack time, and rest time were discussed.

Month 2:

Action taken during this month included:

1. Kindergarten teachers met to discuss curriculum and goals for the month. Ideas for activities in the classroom were shared. Schedules for use of outdoor play area, teacher's aide, and movie projector were established. Each teacher agreed to attend and prepare a program for the Kindergarten Open House scheduled in the evening to accomodate working parents. The administration supported the concept of an evening meeting for parents and agreed to attend.

2. Invitations were made by the children to invite parents to attend the Open House. Invitations varied with each teacher according to their individual art activities in the classroom.

3. The administration sent a newsletter to parents encouraging them to attend the kindergarten Open House, stressing the opportunity to meet their child's teacher and learn about the curriculum.

4. The kindergarten Open House was held in the individual kindergarten classrooms. Each teacher prepared a program for the parents. Two teachers

provided cookies prepared by the children, two teachers used slides to present an overview of the kindergarten day, and two teachers displayed booklets with the work of the children. All six kindergarten teachers prepared material to be handed out to parents with the daily schedule and supplies needed for kindergarten. The meeting was used to establish a cooperative relationship between parents and teachers. Teachers discussed their philosophy and goals for the kindergarten year. Parents were asked to attend two conferences during the school year that would be scheduled at their convenience.

5. Each teacher distributed a survey to the parents to gather information about their interests and concerns about the kindergarten program (See Appendix C - Parent Survey). Parents were urged to return these surveys immediately (a specific date was given) and the reason for their need.

6. All kindergarten teachers sent a letter to parents thanking them for attending the Open House and asking parents who did not attend to phone the school to set a time for a future meeting.

Month 3:

Activities during this month included:

1. Kindergarten teachers met to discuss the start of

parent-teacher conferences. A uniform letter requesting a conference was developed by the group. Each teacher developed specific procedures for handling conferences. Three teachers recommended that parents bring four questions about their child and the curriculum to the conference. Two teachers developed a list of questions to ask parents during the conference, and one teacher used the parent-teacher conference form supplied by the county. Each teacher agreed to use the scheduled conference as an opportunity to establish a partnership with parents to provide the best educational program for the children.

2. To increase the number of parents attending scheduled conferences the kindergarten teachers developed certain techniques to motivate parents. These techniques were the use of stickers to reward those children whose parents attended the scheduled conference. a phone call to the parents the day before the conference. and a drawing or painting done by the child with a short note at the bottom reminding the parent of the scheduled conference. Kindergarten teachers selected the approach they felt would be most effective for the particular parent scheduled.

3. Individual letters were sent by each kindergarten teacher to request parent volunteers for the classroom.

Teachers explained the benefits of being a parent volunteer to the children and the entire kindergarten program. Meetings to discuss the volunteer program in kindergarten were scheduled at the convenience of each teacher.

4. A meeting was held by each kindergarten teacher in their individual classroom to discuss their volunteer program, the duties, the hours, and the skills necessary to work with the children. These meetings were held prior to the start of the school day, following the school day, and during the teachers' planning time.

5. Each teacher began their classroom volunteer program during this month. A schedule of volunteers was sent home to all parents requesting additional volunteers who had not already volunteered.

6. Invitations were made by the students for a program to be presented to parents. Each teacher prepared songs and poems of their choice to be presented in their classroom. Two teachers prepared a joint program that was presented on the stage that included a play by the teachers for students and their parents.

7. Each teacher sent a letter to parents thanking them for attending the program and their cooperation

during the first months of school.

Month 4:

Steps taken during this month included:

1. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss the progress of the program, suggest any additional ideas to add to the program, share special activities for the month, and order necessary supplies and materials. The teachers decided that the monthly newsletter to parents should be written by the individual teacher rather than as a total group.

2. Each teacher sent a letter home to parents highlighting the activities during the month.

3. A special program was prepared by each teacher for presentation to parents.

4. Parents were sent invitations to a special school activity.

5. Two teachers planned a classroom activity in which the children prepared different foods to be served to parents. Two other teachers prepared a joint program of poems and songs followed by refreshments prepared by the children, and two more teachers presented programs in their individual classrooms.

Month 5:

Activities for this month included:

1. A meeting by the kindergarten teachers to discuss

holiday plans. Teachers decided to have the children make gifts for their parents. Teachers decided to present parent volunteers with gifts.

2. Invitations were made by the children and parents were invited to a program at school.

3. Children worked in their individual classrooms to prepare a gift for their parents.

4. Each class presented a holiday program to parents and served refreshments.

5. Teachers decided not to send a newsletter to parents due to the numerous special activities related to the holidays.

Month 6:

Action taken during this month included:

1. Kindergarten teachers met to discuss curriculum, the volunteer program, parent conferences, and a schedule for parents to observe in the classroom for those who were not regular volunteers.

2. Each teacher sent a newsletter to parents outlining the classroom observation, its purpose, and the days and hours available. Each teacher selected a day and time convenient to their daily schedule. Parents were encouraged to arrange their work schedule to allow them to make atleast one classroom visit

during the school year.

3. The primary specialist scheduled a "Make and Take" workshop for parents and sent a flyer to all kindergarten parents announcing the time and date.

Month 7:

The steps taken to implement this program during this month were:

1. The "Make and Take" workshop was presented by the primary specialist. Sample activities for young children were on display for parents to reproduce and take them home to use with their children.

2. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss their volunteer programs, the number of parents who made observations, and the attendance of parent-teacher conferences. The primary specialist and kindergarten teachers discussed plans for a guest speaker to address parents on the topic of child growth and development.

3. A newsletter was sent by each individual teacher discussing the curriculum and skills completed during the first half of the year and informed parents of the upcoming workshop on child growth and development.

Month 8:

The action taken during this month included:

1. A workshop for parents was held to inform them about child growth and development and the concept of

Pre-First grade.

2. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss conferences, student progress and test results and activities for the balance of the school year.

3. A newsletter was sent to parents reviewing the month's activities and accomplishments and encouraging them to visit their child's classroom if they had not yet done so.

Month 9:

Activities planned during this month included:

1. A tea for parents was held in the school library to inform parents about child growth and development and the Pre-First program. The speakers were the primary specialist, and a member of the Early Intervention Team.

2. An invitation to parents regarding a special program by the children was sent to parents.

3. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss their plans for their individual programs, parent-teacher conferences, and placement of children for the following school year.

4. Each child made a gift for their parents.

5. Each class presented a program to parents. Two teachers prepared a joint program on the stage followed by refreshments the children had prepared, and four

teachers presented programs in their individual classrooms followed by refreshments.

6. Parents were asked to demonstrate their knowledge of child development following the presentation of the second child development workshop (See Appendix E - Child Development Questionnaire).

Month 10:

The action taken during this month to complete the implementation of this program included:

1. The kindergarten teachers met to discuss the program and make suggestions about the activities completed. Plans were made for completing the school year. The teachers discussed their feelings about the success of the program from their viewpoint. All teachers were anxious to learn the parents' attitudes toward the program.

2. Invitations were sent to parents for the final kindergarten activity of the school year.

3. Parents were asked to complete an evaluation of the kindergarten program and curriculum (See Appendix D).

4. Children completed their end-of-the-year school projects and gifts for their parents.

5. Each class presented a final activity for parents. Two teachers presented a Circus performance

on the stage followed by refreshments, one teacher presented a program showing the kindergarten year through songs, poems and dance, one teacher invited parents to a pizza party in the classroom, and one teacher invited parents to a make your own sundae party.

6. Parents were asked to complete a survey asking questions about the kindergarten program and their attitude about the school year (See Appendix F).

7. Interviews were conducted with a random sample of parents to discuss their feelings and reactions to the kindergarten program, the teachers, and other school personnel.

This information was collected in order to present the findings and analyze the results of this practicum.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS. CONCLUSIONS. RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Objective 1: Knowledge of kindergarten routine

A parent evaluation form was used to determine if parents had increased their knowledge of the kindergarten routine. Six questions requested specific information about which activities increased their knowledge of the daily routine and the philosophy of the program.

The results showed that of 141 parents, 87% returned the parent evaluation form. Of those parents who responded, 113 or 92% of them stated they understood the daily routine in kindergarten quite well. Additional responses by parents showed 10, or 7.6% reported they understood the daily routine somewhat, and one parent, .4% stated they did not understand the routine very much.

In addition to the evaluation form, random interviews were conducted with parents to determine which activities they felt were most beneficial to their understanding of the kindergarten routine and

program. All parents who were interviewed stated the kindergarten orientation, monthly newsletters and their initial parent-teacher conference were crucial in providing the desired information about the kindergarten routine and program.

Objective 2: Kindergarten Minimum Basic Skills

Two questions on the parent evaluation form asked parents to state their knowledge of the kindergarten minimum basic skills.

These results were taken from the same evaluation form to which 141 parents, or 87% responded. The figures showed that 101 parents stated they understood the minimum basic skills well and 22 reported they understood them somewhat. These figures are 82 % for the former and 18% for the latter.

The interviews with parents revealed that they found the individual parent-teacher conference the most helpful activity to increase their knowledge about the kindergarten minimum basic skills. They stated it was at that time the specific minimum basic skills were discussed and then related to their individual child and his/her progress. This was more meaningful to them than the discussion presented at the kindergarten Open House earlier in the school year, which was limited to generalities about the skills. Some parents stated

they did not ask their questions about the minimum basic skills during Open House, because they were uncomfortable speaking infront of a large group. Parents whose children came from one particular class mentioned they liked the teacher's conference presentation, which included a printed list of the minimum basic skills in a folder with work samples of their child.

Objective 3: Knowledge of Child Development

A child development questionnaire was used to determine if parents increased their knowledge of child growth and development. The questionnaire was distributed to all 141 kindergarten families, although a total of only 66 families attended either workshop. Surprisingly, the questionnaire was returned by 107 parents: a return rate of 76%.

The results of the responses by parents showed that 99 or 92% stated they understood the concept of child growth and development but only 60 or 55% stated that the workshops presented increased their knowledge. The additional nine responses showed seven parents or 6.4% did not increase their knowledge of child development, and two parents, 1.6% stated they would like additional information about the child growth and development process. It is not known whether the 60

families who responded that their knowledge increased as a result of the workshops were the same parents who actually attended. The child development questionnaires were distributed to all families and returned anonymously to allow parents to respond as freely as possible. If this information was available the impact of these figures could be significantly greater.

Parents were asked during interviews if they could suggest reasons why the workshops on child growth and development were not well attended. Most stated that working parents could not leave work to attend, and that the theory of child growth and development did not seem directly related to their child's progress. One parent suggested that a program by each of the kindergarten classes be presented at the end of the workshops to draw parents and increase attendance. Another parent stated that workshops on child growth and develpment were presented by several preschools in the area which some parents may have previously attended. This could explain why 92% stated they understood the concept of child growth and development while 55% stated that the workshops presented were responsible for their knowledge of the concept.

Objective 4: Parent attitudes

A parent attitude survey was administered to all parents of kindergarten children following the last school activity in the individual classes. Of 146 surveys distributed 140 or 95% were returned, the highest rate in this program.

The results of this survey showed that 91% or 128 parents stated their attitude toward their child's teacher, school, and the kindergarten program was very positive. An additional 8% of the responses stated they had a somewhat positive attitude to the kindergarten program and personnel, and less than 1% stated they did not have a positive attitude toward their child's teacher and that the kindergarten program did not meet their child's needs.

Interviews with parents revealed many positive comments about the teachers and their efforts to make their child's first school year a successful one. The interviews were very pleasant and parents related many specific instances where their child's teacher showed special concern for the child, his/her needs, or a problematic situation. All parents stated it was their relationship with the teacher that aided the development of a positive attitude toward the school and other personnel.

Additional results not directly related to the objectives in this practicum were obtained from the comments made by parents during random interviews. Three parents from each kindergarten class were interviewed, a total of 18. All parents responded they enjoyed the kindergarten Open House but felt it was held too early in the school year. They recommended Open House be continued but delayed to the second month of the school year if possible.

Other information gathered from parent interviews showed that parents were pleased with the kindergarten orientation. Comments from parents stated the orientation was helpful to their child by easing their anxiety about what kindergarten was like. They stated it was a very positive initial contact with the school for both the children and themselves.

An important result not measured by the evaluation instruments in this practicum was that 142 parents attended the 146 scheduled conferences. Of the four parents who did not attend the scheduled conferences, three attended conferences rescheduled for a later date, and one parent requested a telephone conference with their child's teacher. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences attained an almost perfect score of 99%.

In summary, the results of this practicum showed that parents increased their knowledge of the kindergarten program and developed a positive attitude toward the school. The activities selected for this program during the implementation period produced positive results for each of the stated objectives. The significance of these results was measured by the responses of parents to questions on three different surveys. Additional positive results were gathered from parents' written comments and personal interviews. The overall findings showed that parents of kindergarten children increased their knowledge of the kindergarten daily routines, the minimum basic skills, the process of child growth and development, and enhanced their attitude toward kindergarten and the school.

Conclusions

From the results of this practicum, it can be concluded that the parents of the kindergarten students increased their knowledge of the kindergarten program. This was concluded from the responses to questions found on the parent surveys and questionnaires. It can be inferred that these results were produced by the specific activities and techniques used by the kindergarten teachers in this program.

It can be concluded that parents increased their knowledge of the kindergarten program from printed material distributed, monthly newsletters, classroom observations and programs presented by the children. Parents indicated these activities were the ones most helpful to them when responding to questions about these items.

Parent attitudes toward the kindergarten program, curriculum, teachers, and the school were positive. All parents except for 1% reported positive attitudes at the conclusion of the school year. Most parents responded that their attitude could be attributed to their child's teacher, their initial conference, and the special programs planned by the teachers to which they were invited. A large group of parents stated they would like to see special presentations by the children continued in their future classes.

Kindergarten teachers discussed the school year as one which was extremely smooth in terms of interaction with parents. The primary specialist reported only two parents requested their child be moved to another kindergarten class during the first month of school. Teachers stated that phone calls and unscheduled visits by parents decreased regarding routine kindergarten

matters. Conferences between parents and teachers were well attended and only six parents requested a meeting with the primary specialist to discuss their child's placement for the following year. The principal reported no parents requested a conference to discuss their child's placement or their child's teacher. All kindergarten teachers stated they felt the kindergarten orientation and the kindergarten Open House had positive effects on their relationship with the parents and children. Plans to continue these activities will be made prior to the next school year.

The general conclusion can be made that parents of the kindergarten children increased their knowledge of the kindergarten program and their attitude toward their child's school. For the purpose of this practicum it can be stated that the objectives were met. The essential features of this practicum were the use of activities which would include the parents on a regular basis in their child's educational program. For some parents this was accomplished through classroom observations, parent-teacher conferences, monthly newsletters and special presentations by their children.

It is important to note that these activities were selected from the literature, yet no study used this

particular combination of activities. One factor that played an important role in producing positive results in the present practicum is the willingness of the kindergarten teachers to be part of this project. Each teacher shared ideas and cooperated on group projects. Williams and Stallworth (1982) discuss that a good program for parent involvement requires training of teachers and at least a team of two persons to have successful results. Educators working in groups develop a comradery that encourages undertaking more activities than teachers who work individually.

Building positive parent-teacher relationships can be accomplished by many different activities. Goodall (1983) stated a positive-parent teacher relationship developed early in the school year allows for parental acceptance of teacher recommendations. This concept may well have contributed to the general acceptance by parents of teachers' recommendations regarding student placement for the following year.

Parent conferences played a factor in the development of a positive parent-teacher relationship in this practicum. Parent interest in their child's educational program may not be obvious at all times, but teachers should willing to develop the interest

during the parent-teacher conference. Teachers should assume the parent is eager to cooperate with the teacher and is knowledgeable about their child. A teacher who uses the conference time to establish an alliance with the parent may gain parent support and particpation in the program (Arnold, 1978).

One conclusion found in the literature suggested the use of homework packets for parents to increase their interaction with the school and their child (Goodall, 1985). Although not an activity in this program on a regular basis, the "Make and Take" workshop for parents to make learning activities for their home use, was well received by those parents in attendance. Rather than preparing packets of home learning activities for children, perhaps workshops where parents can be educated about developmentally appropriate activities can be presented on a more regular basis.

The results of the present practicum suggest the value of the activities used to promote increased parent knowledge of kindergarten and the development of positive parent attitudes. This development of positive parent attitudes toward the kindergarten program, teachers, and the school may have long-term benefits. One benefit which may be observed the

following school year, is a willingness by parents to volunteer and cooperate with their child's new teacher.

Recommendations

The recommendations for other programs similar to this one are:

1. Develop a booklet to distribute to parents prior to the kindergarten orientation that answers basic questions about the daily routine.

2. Maintain a file of all kindergarten activities which were part of the program for future reference and expansion.

3. Communicate with parents the importance of the kindergarten program at the beginning of the school year.

4. Inform parents that one of your goals is to have them develop a positive attitude toward the school.

5. Contact local newspapers to come into the classroom to observe parent volunteers for possible photographs and articles.

Dissemination

The plans for disseminating the results of the practicum are:

1. Share the results with the kindergarten teachers.

2. Share the results with the principal and primary specialist.

3. Share the results with the faculty to encourage similar projects in other grade levels to improve parent-teacher relationships.

4. Submit a copy to the Director of Early Childhood Education for future reference and possible use at other elementary schools.

5. Submit a grant proposal to the county to receive funds to develop a kindergarten booklet for distribution to parents.

6. Submit an article to early childhood magazines and journals to encourage similar programs in other settings.

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Appendix A

Primary Specialist Interview

Directions: Circle one response.

1. Do you feel the number of parent contacts with teachers could be minimized?

yes no

2. Could parent questions be handled differently in your opinion?

yes no

3. Are numerous parent contacts with teachers a problem to kindergarten teachers?

yes no

4. Do parents want more information about the kindergarten program?

yes no

5. Could parent involvement in the kindergarten program be increased to benefit the teachers and the children?

yes no

6. What kinds of information are parents seeking about the kindergarten program? Please list topics most frequently asked about by parents.

7. What information about the kindergarten program would you suggest be given to parents? Please write a brief list or statement.

8. What suggestions could you make to kindergarten teachers to answer parents' questions and involve them in the kindergarten program? Please list any ideas you might have for doing this.

Appendix B

Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire

Directions: Circle one response.

1. Do you think parents need additional information about the kindergarten program to eliminate the number of contacts?

Yes No

2. In your opinion, do you feel all parent contacts are seeking critical information about the kindergarten program?

Yes No

3. Would you like to see parent contacts about daily kindergarten routines eliminated?

Yes No

4. Would you like to see contacts about student adjustment and/or progress improved?

Yes No

5. Do you feel parents need more information on child growth and development?

Yes No

6. Would you like to see parents more involved in the kindergarten program? How might this be accomplished?

7. What topics could you suggest parents be informed of to avoid contacts? Please list topics.

8. Suggest some ways you think that parent contacts could be minimized. Please list your ideas.

Appendix C

Parent Survey

Directions: Please circle your answer.

1. Would you like more information about the kindergarten program?

Yes No

2. Would you be willing to attend an evening kindergarten meeting to gain information about the curriculum?

Yes No

3. Do you know what is meant by a developmental program?

Yes No

4. Would you like to volunteer in your child's class to further your understanding of the kindergarten curriculum?

Yes No

5. Would you like to receive suggestions on activities to do at home with your child?

Yes No

6. Would printed material be helpful to you to understand the curriculum?

Yes No

7. Briefly write what you consider the most important thing you child should learn as a result of this kindergarten program.

8. Briefly write what you think the goal of the kindergarten curriculum is.

9. Please list some of the things you would like to know about the kindergarten program.

10. Please suggest some ways that you might find helpful to learn more about tne kindergarten program.

Appendix D

Child Development Questionnaire

Directions: Circle a yes of no response to each question below.

1. Do you believe or support the theory of child growth and development?

Yes No

2. Will you use your knowledge of child growth and development to decide your child's placement for the next school year?

Yes No

3. Do you feel you understand the goal of the curriculum related to child growth and development?

Yes No

4. Did the workshops presented on child growth and development increase your knowledge of the theory?

Yes No

5. Do you feel you need more information to understand the theory of child growth and development?

Yes No

6. What do you believe to be the goal of the child growth and development theory. Please write one or two sentences.

Appendix E

Parent Evaluation Form

Directions: Circle one response for each question.

1. Do you understand the daily routine in kindergarten?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

2. Did the kindergarten orientation prior to the first day of school explain the routines of kindergarten?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

3. Was the kindergarten Open House in the evening helpful in explaining the kindergarten curriculum?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

4. Do you feel you need the kindergarten program explained further?

(a) Surely (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

5. Do you understand what the minimum basic skills are?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

6. Was the printed material helpful to your understanding of kindergarten routines and curriculum?

(a) Surely (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

7. Do you feel your knowledge of the kindergarten program and its requirements has increased?

(a) Very Much (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

8. Did the teacher try to involve you in the kindergarten program?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

Appendix F

Parent Attitude Survey

Directions: Circle one response for each question.

1. Did you have a good working relationship with your child's teacher?

(a) Surely (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

2. Did you find the curriculum presented in kindergarten satisfactory?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

3. Were other school personnel helpful to you?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

4. Did you find the kindergarten orientation informative?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

5. Did you find the kindergarten Open House in the evening helpful and informative?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

6. Did you find the monthly kindergarten newsletters informative?

(a) Always (b) Most of the time (c) Sometimes (d) Never

7. Did you enjoy the special presentations by the children (e.g. holiday shows, poems, songs, plays)?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

8. Did you find the parent workshops that were held meaningful?

(a) A lot (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

9. Were your conferences with the teacher informative?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

10. Did you have an opportunity to express your concerns and ask questions at the conference?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

11. Do you feel the activities mentioned above were helpful in developing a positive attitude toward your child's teacher?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

12. Do you feel the activities mentioned above were helpful in developing a positive attitude toward the school?

(a) Very much so (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

13. Did you volunteer in your child's classroom?

(a) Regularly (b) Sometimes (c) Rarely (d) Never

14. Did you volunteer in other parts of your child's school?

(a) Regularly (b) Sometimes (c) Rarely (d) Never

15. Were you able to make a visitation to your child's classroom?

(a) At least twice (b) Twice (c) Once (d) Never

16. Do you feel you were involved in your child's educational program?

(a) Surely (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

17. Did the previously mentioned activities encourage you to become involved in your child's educational program?
(a) Surely (b) Somewhat (c) Not so much (d) Not at all

18. Would you recommend this school to other parents?
(a) Always (b) Most of the time (c) Sometimes (d) Never

Please feel free to write any comments you wish to share about this school year.

APPENDIX G

CONFERENCE REQUEST LETTER

SCHOOL NAME
SCHOOL ADDRESS

_____
(Date)

Dear Mr. and Mrs._____,

At this time I would like to request a conference with you to discuss your child,_____. To make this a special time for us to share our knowledge about your child's educational progress, I have set aside the following time:_____ at_____A.M./P.M. Please jot down any specific questions or concerns you might have for discussion and bring them with you at that time.

I would appreciate it if you would sign this form and return it to school tomorrow. If this time is not convenient, please let me know and suggest a date that will be. I look forward to meeting with you very soon.

Sincerely,

_____
Teacher's signature

_____
Parent's signature

Adapted from: Broward County School Board. Division of Instruction. Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Author

Appendix H

Parent Interview Form

1. Please share what activities you felt were the most informative part of the kindergarten program.

2. What additional aspects would you like to see included in the kindergarten program?

3. Please discuss how you were involved in the kindergarten program this year.

4. What specific behaviors or activities were influential in developing your attitude toward the kindergarten program?